

REMARKS

By this amendment, Applicant has amended claims 1, 6, and 7, canceled claim 5, without prejudice, and added claim 36. As a result, claims 1-36 are pending in this application. These amendments are being made to facilitate early allowance of the presently claimed subject matter. Applicant does not acquiesce in the correctness of the objections and rejections and reserves the right to pursue the full scope of the subject matter of the original claims in a subsequent patent application that claims priority to the instant application. Reconsideration in view of the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Initially, Applicant thanks the Examiner and his supervisor for their time in discussing the rejected claim 1 during a telephone interview with Applicant's representative, which was conducted on April 15, 2004. Further, Applicant thanks the Examiner for his consideration of a proposed after final amendment sent to the Examiner on April 16, 2004, and a follow-up telephone interview conducted on April 21, 2004. During the conversations, claim 1 was discussed with reference to U.S. Patent No. 6,283,341 (Wilkerson), U.S. Patent No. 6,065,654 (Evensen), U.S. Patent No. 6,056,171 (Santamaria), and U.S. Patent No. 1,690,516 (Wickers). Language to clarify the unique functionality of the fore handle as shown in, for example, FIGS. 11-14 was discussed. Applicant provided a proposed amended claim 1 for consideration in light of the first telephone interview. During the follow-up telephone conversation, the Examiner requested that the claimed carriage structure hook lobes and stems from claims 5 and 6 also be included in independent claim 1. In response, Applicant has amended claim 1 to include the hook lobes and yokes from claims 5 and 6. No exhibits were presented during the discussions.

As understood by Applicant, in the Final Office Action, claims 1-5, 7-11, 13-16, 18-19, 31, and 35 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 1,690,516 (Wickers) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,283,342 (Wilkerson). With regard to claims 7 and 31, Applicant notes that the Office fails to indicate on the Office Action Summary the status of these claims. However, since the Office presents arguments rejecting both claims in paragraph 3 of the Final Office Action, Applicant assumes that these claims remain rejected. Further, with regard to claim 30, the Office Action Summary indicates that claim 30 was allowed, while paragraph 3 indicates that claim 30 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Since claim 30 depends on an allowed claim 26 and the Office does not present any arguments with respect to claim 30, Applicant respectfully submits that the indication that claim 30 is rejected is in error. As a result, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of this rejection.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating the allowable subject matter included in claims 6, 12, 17, 20-30 and 32-34. With regard to claim 1, Applicant respectfully submits that neither Wickers nor Wilkerson discloses or suggests, *inter alia*, a carriage that includes a pair of opposing hook lobes and a pair of yokes. In particular, the Office has continually stated that previously presented claim 6 includes allowable subject matter. Applicant has herein included the hook lobes and yokes from the previous claims 5 and 6 into claim 1. As a result, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 is allowable as amended.

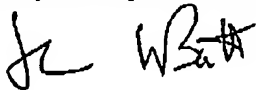
Applicant respectfully submits that each of the rejected dependent claims is patentable for the above-stated reasons as well as their own unique features. For example, the Office rejects ; claim 35 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Wickers in view of Wilkerson and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,056,171 (Santamaria). To this extent, the

Office recognizes that Wickers and Wilkerson fail to disclose a device that lifts the footwear. However, the Office alleges that Santamaria allegedly discloses this feature. Applicant respectfully submits that Santamaria fails to disclose, *inter alia*, a carriage that lifts footwear during donning. Applicant notes that the Office has not cited and Applicant cannot find any portion of Santamaria that discloses a carriage that lifts footwear during donning. As a result, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of this rejection or that the Office cite the portion of Santamaria that allegedly discloses this feature.

With regard to the newly added claim 36, Applicant has previously presented this feature to the Examiner for consideration in a proposed amendment. The Examiner indicated that this language would overcome Wickers, Wilkerson, Santamaria, and Evenson. Support for this amendment is clearly shown in FIGS. 11-14, and the accompanying discussion. As a result, Applicant respectfully submits that this claim is allowable as presented.

In light of the above, Applicant respectfully submits that all claims are in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner require anything further to place the application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's undersigned representative at the number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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